

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in reply to the Office Action mailed August 16, 2005.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 18, 23, and add new claims 32 – 49. The originally-filed specification fully supports the subject matter of amended claims 1, 18, 23, and new claims 32 – 49. No new matter has been added.

Before entry of this Amendment, claims 1-14 and 17-31 were pending in this application, with claim 30 having been withdrawn from consideration. After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-14 and 17- 49 are pending in this application, with claim 30 still having been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 18, 23, 32, and 43 are the sole independent claims.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-5, 10-14, 17-29, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S Patent No. 6,370,915 to Fujimoto et al. (“Fujimoto”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Fujimoto does not disclose the claimed invention. For example, each of independent claims 1 and 18 recites a load conveyance device including, among other aspects “when the load is not supported by change of the force of the fluid without changing size of the through hole, the load drops from a lower end of the through hole to an outside”. In another example, independent claim 23 discloses a conveyance method including, among other aspects “a step of stopping a support of the load by changing a flow condition of the fluid without changing size of the through hole”.

Fujimoto does not disclose at least these respective aspects of the claimed invention

either alone or in combination with the other aspects of the respective claimed inventions.

Instead, assuming *argued* that the floating plates 15 of Fujimoto define the through hole, Fujimoto discloses that the floating plates 15 are separated to the left and right sides by an opening of the support arm 14, thereby changing the size of the through hole formed by the floating plates 15 (see column 12, lines 10-12 and FIG. 20).

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the section 102(e) rejection of claims 1, 18, and 23 and their respective dependent claims.

Applicants further submit that claims 2-5, 10-14, 17, 19-22, 24-29, and 31 depend from one of independent claims 1, 18, and 23, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claims 1, 18, and 23 are allowable. In addition, each of the dependent claims recite unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by prior art, and therefore each also are separately patentable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In discussing the specification and claims in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in

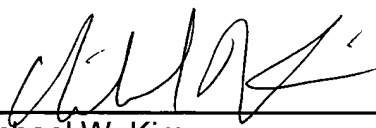
the drawings. Rather, Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this Amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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